1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

2. The Division of Labor.

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462 Besides the dimensions of time and space, the factor of the use of energy is important in material culture. The Amhara of Ethiopia still uses the force of their own muscles as the primary source of industrial power, and their material culture has thus remained basically unchanged, especially in the aspect of human organization of labor.

There is sharp seasonal division of labor among the Amhara, already described in connection with agriculture, the major occupation. This is largely determined by the climate, the heavy rains and little rains, the long dry season; and the very limited conquest of nature by the people in this area, which does not go beyond occasional irrigation ditches. As a result, the seasonal division of labor follows every minute change in the ewather, differs womewhat from year to year depending on early or late onset of the rains. The human organization aspect of agriculture and feasts remains ruled by the weather, which dominates the ecological and religious calendar of activities.

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596 Human organization of labor among the Amhara seems to follow two major principles: (1), Extension of the family organization. The extended family is self-sufficient in most needs for food, shelter, and the spinning of cotton for clothing. Salt and raw cotton are the only basic purchases, and only the services of smith, potter, tanner and weaver are actually essential, though there are a few other cultural elaborations. The extended family is also the major producing unit, in agriculture and animal husbandry. It has traditionally limited its own production

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[597] because the often arbitrary, confiscatory taxation have lain heaviest on the producer of the most abundant harvest.

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554 (2) The attitude despising labor as an activity for slaves or lower-class ethnic groups, especially if the labor is skilled. Acquisition of special labor skills led to enforced migration, serfdom close to slavery, as has been described. Shame is attached to it, by the Amhara. For him, only agriculture, settled animal husbandry, warfare and spiritual activity in church or healing are acceptable. Even in this group of non-ignoble occupations, there are limitations. A farmer who would try to improve the quality of his land on any but a year-to-year basis, would be very unusual and an object of ridicule. For such land would arouse the evil eye, or the envy of the feudal lord, who would increase his tribute or, in case of family freeholds("rest"), increase his extortion of services. Even though a formal "corvee" has very recently been declared illegal, the local rural statute labor cannot be changed much by the central government, especially since it usually appoints former feudal lords to administrative positions in rural districts.

[633] Principle (1) dominates the division of labor by sex, and to some extent by age. It also sets the pattern for the need for and existence of market-places that become urban centers, places where specialist not found among the scattered hamlets can be encountered: in entertainment, in trading goods brought by caravan, in higher justice, higher church, better medicine, and recently, in the availability for some of the 8-year elementary school.

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463 The rural extended family is also the residential unit, the
596 hamlet, and this principle affects the rural residence of the ethnic specialists: the Faqi tanners occupy their own hamlets, Falasha smiths theirs, and, within each ethnic hamlet, the specialists are related by kinship, usually patrilocal as well as patrilineal.

463 Principle (2) here creates the basis forthe ethnic
563 division of labor. The concern of the Amhara is not the time and effort saved by each group doing a specialized task, it is to retain prestige by not working at a skilled manual task but having social inferiors do it for them. Time is not much concern in this culture, for labor is paid by the job, not the hour. Labor is cheap, and since the material culture is relatively undeveloped technically, the work does not require the close synchronization of modern, Western factories. Thus, as long as the primary source of power consists of muscular force and simple technology, the old ethnic division of labor remains satisfactory to the Amhara, and often even to the ethnic specialists whose livelihood is assured.

The Amhara has more confidence that an iron plow-point or pot made by the Falasha is well-made, or that a toga woven by a Muslim will give long wear, than he exhibits if a poor Amhara has learned the crafts and tries to sell him his products. For, he reasons, has not the ethnic workman learned his craft since childhood, from his father, who in turn has practiced and perfected it for countless generations? The Amhara purchaser suspects that a new

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539 "When kinfolk aid each other,
no trouble can sever them".

"The needle does not see her own hole
yet it serves her so well",

(said of a man, who, as is common, is generous to his brothers and sisters, yet stingy to his wife and even children).

"When the nose is hit,
the eye begins to weep",

(i.e when one relative is hurt, the others suffer with him).

602 Kin relations give the individual his greatest source of security, psychological and economic, to the Amhara mind, and protect him from the world outside.
[574] Therefore, regular and frequent visiting of kinfolk is emphasized; it is one of the most frequent causes of absentiism of Amhara employees. Events of the life cycle (marriages, memorial feasts, etc.) require such visiting. The end of the rainy season is another stimulus. No other association seriously challenges the predominance of kin relations in Amhara society.

A. The Extended Family and Kinship Terms.

• 596 The extended patrilocal, patrilineal family usually inhabits its own hamlet, farms its own land, allocating it to its biological-nuclear families. Patriarchal elders form an informal council that can be convened in any case of need. This extended family is most typically found among owners of "rest" land

596 (private freehold), most common in the old-Amhara provinces (and in Tigre). "Rest" land is inherited only by sons, not by daughters, except in the relatively rare case when a family short of young men permits a son-in-law to settle in its hamlet, whereupon some land may be inherited by the daughter who is consanguinal kin. Daughters may inherit movables such as cows, sheep, some personal belongings of their mother or father (of the father if there are no sons).

601 Kinship terms do not often differ between terms of address and reference, but often between formal and informal terms which are applied in a variety of ways ranging from authoritarian familiarity to endearments. Differences of gender are also expressed.

The generic term for kinfolk is "zämäd". Consanguinal kinfolk, on both the father's and mother's side, are called "wägän", and if they reside far away and are rarely seen the kinship is re-emphasized by the term "yäsega zämäd" (lit. kinship of one flesh). Consanguinal families sharing the same residential hamlet are called "betä zämäd" (lit. kinfolk of the house). It is noteworthy that in very recent times, in urban areas where kinship functions are somewhat attenuated, the term "zamad" has become extended to include a close personal, though not related, friend.

The affinal relationship is generically called "amachenät", a male affinal relative is addressed and referred to as "amach", a female as "amcha"; whether ego is male or female.

606 to be a "good wife", to do "everything right", to learn what her husband likes. If she does not obey her mother-in-law, she is criticized as "rude", and the women say that the groom will "divorce her soon".

423 596 After the marriage, and especially after she bears children, a wife is regarded as a charter member of her husband's "byet" (lit. house), his family of procreation, continuing his patrilineal kinship unit, regardless of whether they move to residence elsewhere or not. Nevertheless, it is the "byet" that is the landholding unit among most "rest"-owning Amhara, and each biological unit within it receives an allocation of land for usufruct; the limit of one able-bodied plowman is regarded as 5-10 "qada". Thus, the biological family of procreation does not own land, nor does it control it, until, with the death of elders and advancing age, it becomes the "family of orientation" to which a succeeding generation must give obedience.

596 422 Meanwhile, however, the biological family unit does own the cattle and other mobile goods with which they started their married life, and the increase therefrom. This gives them some partial economic independence.

[731] 423 166 361 When, due to war, epidemics (e.g. malaria), or famine (erosion), a "byet" decides to abandon, for the time being, the ancestral lands, and migrates to another district, it usually huddles together in one or a minimum of residential hamlets, sometimes for several generations, until times are better. Then it buds off so rapidly that soon only a few huts remain on the location of the original hamlet of refuge. Thereupon kinsmen may claim "betäna" rights of usufruct from more distant kinfolk who had remained be-